

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB. TH

SUBJECT: NEW LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE

REF: BANGKOK A-194

1. LEADERS OF THAI BUSINESS AND LABOR AGREED SEPTEMBER 14 TO ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN LABOR MANAGEMENT HARMONY. THE TWO GROUPS LED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE THAI BOARD OF TRADE, OB WASURAT AND THAI LABOR COUNCIL (TLC) PRESIDENT PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN AGREED TO HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS OF A COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH SIDES TO COOPERATE IN KEEPING OUTSIDERS FROM BECOMING INVOLVED IN LABOR DISPUTES AND TO MEDIATE AND ARBITRATE ANY DISPUTES THAT MIGHT ARISE. MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS WOULD ALSO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE THE THAI LABOR COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE.

2. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH TLC OFFICIALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING, EMBOFF WAS TOLD THE CONCEPT OF A TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE WAS SUGGESTED BY RTG LABOR DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR GENERAL NIKHOM CHANTHARAWITHUN DURING THE ILO CONVENTION LAST JUNE. LABOR AND NAMAGEMENT OFFICIALS ACCEPTED THE IDEA BUT NAMAGEMENT LEADERS REQUESTED A DELAY WHILE THEY ESTABLISHED EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATIONS AND A FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATIONS (REF AIRGRAM). IN PART DUE TO THE DEEP AND BITTER DISTRUST THAT EXISTS BETWEEN OB AND NIKHOM AND IN PART TO AVOID ORCHESTRATION BY NIKHOM AND THE RTG , LABOR/MANAGEMENT

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LEADERS DECIDED TO ESTABLISH THE COMMITTEE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT

PARTICIPATION.

3. COMMENT: OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS AN UNEASY CALM HAS MARKED THAI LABOR AFFAIRS. MANAGEMENT LABOR AND RTG REPRESENTATIVES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SEVERAL SEMINARS FOCUSING ON PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL CONCERN AND LABOR AND MANAGEMENT HAVE INDICATED A

DESIRE TO COOPERATE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL RESPECT. THE PROMISE BY BOTH PARTIES TO WORK TO ELIMINATE OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN LABOR AFFAIRS MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO THE PARTIES. LABOR IS ANXIOUS TO KEEP DISPUTES OUT OF THE RTG LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE LABOR RELATIONS ACT OF 1975. MANAGEMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS MORE INTERESTED IN LIMITING THE ROLE OF LEFTIST STUDENT-SUPPORTED ACTIVISTS AND LABOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.
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